DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 290 560 PS 017 107

AUTHOR Monighan, Patricia
TITLE Parents and Preschoolers Report on Home Play Patterns, Television and Pretending.
PUB DATE Apr 86
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 16-20, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Patterns; Early Childhood Education; Educational Environment; *Family Environment; Fathers; Mothers; *Parent Influence; *Play; *Preschool Children; *Pretend Play; Television Viewing

ABSTRACT

Data from observations, parent questionnaires, and child interviews were collected from 36 preschool children and their parents for this investigation of the relationships between preschool children's play patterns at home and at school, and variables from the home environment. In addition, comparisons were made between: (1) mothers' responses to questions concerning the home play environment, television viewing patterns, and attitudes toward fantasy play; (2) fathers' responses to the same items; and (3) children's responses in interviews concerning their make-believe play, and their preferences for activities and television programs. A 34-item reference list and 5 data tables conclude the document. (PCB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED290560

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association
San Francisco, California, April, 1986

Parents and Preschoolers Report on Home Play Patterns, Television and Pretending

by: Patricia Monighan
Mills College, Oakland, CA

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Patricia Monighan-Nourot
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Introduction

This study represents a more detailed analysis of data from hand-recorded observations, parent questionnaires and child interviews collected as a part of a study conducted in 1981. The sample consists of 36 preschool children, ranging in age from 30 to 66 months and their mothers and fathers. The study is designed to explore relationships between preschool childrens play patterns, at home and at school and variables from the home environment. In addition comparisions are drawn between the mothers' responses to questions addressing the home play environment, television viewing patterns, and attitudes toward fantasy play, the fathers' responses to the same items, and the children's responses in interviews concerning their make believe play and preferences for activities and television programs.

Background

Research on the ways in which the home environment and adult participation may facilitate social and cognitive complexity in children's play is expanding rapidly at this time. Some studies report on the effects of childrearing practices and the characteristics of home environments on toddler's play (Dunn and Dale, 1984; Dunn and Wooding, 1977).

A few recent studies have examined parent-child play in the homes of preschoolers and have begun to document the differences between mothers and fathers play with children as well as the range of individual differences in parental styles of play. (Di Pietro, 1981; Forys and McCune-Nicholch, 1984; Joopnarine and Mounts, 1985; Langlois and Downs, 1980; Tizard and Hughes, 1984).

PS 017107

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In preliminary analysis of the data for the present study, several mothers as primary caretaker noted that they felt their husbands played more freely or imaginatively with the children. This relates to previous research on home play patterns indicating that mothers may be more directive and less playful with their children than fathers, or alternatively, that one parent may be more inclined to such interaction and may foster facility with make believe in a young child, without the participation or even conscious support of his or her partner. In research reported by Silvern & Williamson (1985), quality of parent interaction in computer play varied with the particular child observed; some siblings were treated quite differently by their parents. It appears that complex interactions of parents and child relationships and attitudes may shape the fostering of imagination and play. (Fein, 1985; O'Connell and Bretherton, 1984).

A third focus that has begun to emerge is the nature of sibling play in the home. Researchers such as Dunn and Dale, 1984, have commented on the importance of siblings and the unique contribution to the modeling and opportunity for fantasy they may afford the young child. Comparisons by Dunn and Dale concerning the degree of participation of parents vs. siblings indicate that parents may more frequently interact as "spectators" to their childrens play, commenting from the sidelines or suggesting props or themes without actually taking a role. Siblings, on the other hand may be more likely to play "complementary actor" roles in make-believe sequences in the home.

Parental attitudes and child-rearing practices may also have a substantial impact on the development of children's play. Singer (1973) cites several variables related to the development of high fantasy predisposition in the personality of the preschool child. These include: parent modeling of make-believe play, opportunity for privacy and exposure to story telling and books. Bishop and Chace (1971) found that parental attitudes toward play and

characteristics of the home play environment were significantly related to increases of potential creativity for 3 and 4 year olds. Fein (1980) reports that mothers who elaborated their toddler's play activity by extension into make-believe themes facilitated their children's development of symbolic functioning. In more recent work, both Schwartzmann and Dunn (1985) note that the trend for lower and working class parents to discourage fantasy play for their children appears to be more prevalent among middle class parents in recent years. The underlying premises for these attitudes are that make-believe play is connected to deceit and lying (Bretherton, 1985). Alternatively, some parents fear that such "frivolus" activities may undermine their preschool child's competitive edge at early academics. (Almy et al., 1983). Tizard and Hughes, 1984, found that middle class mothers expressed more positive attitudes toward make-believe play than working class mothers, although both classes engaged in pretend play with their daughters.

Another variable thought by both researchers and teachers to be related to children's play at school is television viewing in the home. Assumptions in research on television for preschool age children have shifted from concern with content of programming to concern with the passive process involved in the television viewing experience (Cohen, 1979, Honig, 1983). A question related to the passivity of this experience is, what could children be doing instead of watching TV? Winn (1977) notes that most young children would be playing and talking with others if TV were not an option. She argues that TV may excessively stimulate brain activity related to visual-spatial processes at the expense of the development of verbal-analytic processes. Recently, Murray (1980) reviewed research on children's verbal skills and television viewing. Although no effects were found for word knowledge or spatial ability, creative verbal fluency was lower for heavy television viewers. Many educators and

researchers emphasize the role of parents as "gatekeeper" to the TV world for their children. Watching television and discussing content is thought to be as important as restricting the amount of time and content of programs for young children (Honig, 1983), but the effects of such monitoring are difficult to measure (Murray, 1980). For this study, parents responded to questions concerning: time spent watching TV, presence of adults when watching TV; children's preferences for programming; establishment of family rules for monitoring TV, and opportunities for play and privacy. These variables are examined in light of the children's play complexity scores as well as comparing information from both parents and children in the home.

Participants and Data Collection

Data were collected over a four month period during the school year 1980-81 by the investigator who was Teacher Director of a private parent cooperative preschool in a small community north of San Francisco Bay Area. All families in the study were of middle class socio-economic levels, as measured by the Hollingshead index. Thirty-three of the mothers considered themselves primarily home-makers. Three mothers worked full-time and fathers shared caretaking responsibilities for the children. Fifteen of the mothers worked part-time, many as nurses or as teachers aides. Of the 44 families in the school who volunteered to participate in the study, 36 children were randomly selected until the criteria of age and sex for each of three age groups were met. Ranges and means for each group are presented in Table I.

All families had two parents living at home, and at least one of the parents was a regular participant in the child's preschool classroom. All 36 mothers of participants in the study returned the questionnaires used as a data source. 35 of 36 fathers returned completed questionnaires. Mothers ranged in age from 22-36 years old with a mean age of 28. Fathers ranged in age from 23-37 years of age with a mean age of 31. Thirty-one of the 36 families had 2

children, four families had 3 children and one family had a single child. Tape-recorded interviews were completed with 25 of the children, using a form of the introspective interview (Singer, 1973) adapted for use with young children. This adaptation was based on previous research on imaginary play in a preschool setting (Monighan, 1978). Play complexity scores for each child were taken from results of the observational portion of the study already completed (Monighan, 1985) and are presented in Table 2. Teacher ratings of imaginativeness were obtained for males and females in each age group.

RESULTS

Differences in Mothers and Fathers Play Patterns

Significant differences were found in the predominant modes of play reported by mothers and fathers. Both mothers and fathers of sons ($N=35; \chi^2=19.2, d.f.=2, p. < .01$) and mothers and fathers of daughters ($N=36, \chi^2=11.56, d.f.=2, p < .01$) played differently with their children. Of the fathers of sons, 75% reported rough and tumble play as the predominant form of play with their children; 19% of fathers of sons reported make-believe play as the predominant form, and only 6% reported commerical games with rules as the most frequent form of play with their sons. None of the mothers of sons reported rough and tumble play as the predominant mode of play with their children, while 75% reported make-believe play and 25% reported commerical games with rules as the most frequent mode of play with their sons.

In looking at the parents of daughters, 56% of the fathers report rough and tumble play as the most frequent kind of play with their children, 23% make-believe and 23% commercial games. In contrast, only 11% of the mothers of daughters engaged primarily in rough and tumble play, while 78% reported make-believe play as the most frequent kind of play with their daughters and 11% reported commercial games.

Even though the percent of fathers reporting rough and tumble play with their daughters was lower than that reported for fathers of sons, the differences were not statistically significant, indicating that fathers appear to play similarly with children of either sex. With mothers, there was also a contract (some mothers of daughters reported rengagement in rough and tumble play, while those of sons did not), but these differences were not significant. As with fathers, mothers seem to play similarly with children of either sex.

These findings support those of Joopnanine and Mounts (1985) and Di Pietro (1981) in indicating that mothers and fathers play differently with their children. These findings also support Joopnarine and Mounts who noted that parental treatment of sons and daughters was very similar, but are inconsistent with other findings in the literature on parent-child play patterns (Langlois and Downs, 1980).

Interestingly, out of the 12 children who gave codeable information regarding differential play patterns with parents, the 7 boys all reported rough and tumble play with their dads, as did one of the girls. In addition, 8 of the 12 children explicitly contrasted playing "pretend" with their moms and "tickle and chase" games with their dads.

All of these families had both parents living in the home. It might be interesting for future research to explore if and how these patterns may be different in single parent households, particularly those of single mothers with preschool aged sons.

Parental Attitudes Toward Make-Believe

Other variables that were expected to show differences were parental attitudes toward pretend activity in the home, and techniques for encouraging pretend play in their children. Parents were asked to respond to the question: "Would make-believe play ever be dangerous for young children? If so, how would you as a parent recognize this danger?" They were also asked in what ways and in

what situations they would encourage and/or discourage make-believe activity on the part of their children.

As expected, mothers (N=36) reported encouraging pretend activity on the part of their children significantly more often than fathers (N=35). (χ^2=11.36, d.f.=1, p=<.01). Ninety seven- percent of the mothers reported that they encouraged pretend activity in the home, while 69% of the fathers expressed this attitude and behavior. This finding supports the findings of Tizard and Hughes (1984) that middle class mothers in Great Britain thought make-believe play to be valuable to their daughters' development. In the present study, frequency of mothers of sons and of daughters reporting encouragement of pretend play were approximately equal, while fathers of sons more often reported encouraging pretend activity (43%) than fathers of daughters (26%), although this difference was not statistically significant.

There was only one mother who reported not encouraging pretend play with her daughter. This child's father also reported disapproval of pretend activity in the home, and she had no siblings. She had, in fact, invented an imaginary sister to play with, and ranked the highest in solitary play and the lowest in group play for her age group (55-65 months). She also had an above average percent frequency of constructive solitary play for her group. These findings might indicate classification as a "social isolate" in a preschool setting, according to research described by Rubin (1985). With only one child, it is difficult to speculate about related variables, but both myself and her teacher (who rated this child last out of her peers on imaginativeness) were interested to find that she was the only child who did not have support for make-believe activity in her home.

How Pretend Play is Encouraged

Of the parents (35 mothers and 24 fathers) who reported encouraging pretend play, 9% of the mothers and 21% of the fathers said they encouraged play by not

interfering with it; 31% of the mothers and 12.5% of the fathers reported providing props and costumes (eg: toy dinosaurs, baby bottles, fireman hats or ballerina dresses) as means of encouraging make-believe play. Sixty percent of the mothers and 50% of the fathers noted that they directly modeled pretend activity with their preschool children.

Out of those who directly modeled pretend play, 48% of the mothers and 25% of the fathers described themselves as "outside spectators" to their children's play. They reported asking questions (eg: "How's your baby today?") and suggesting themes or props (eg: "Do you think Bappy would like to go to MacDonalds?") but not actually taking a role in the play. On the other hand, 52% of the mothers and 75% of the fathers described their encouragement as taking the form of role play in their child's pretend sequences. (eg: "I play the role of the customer when she is the baker" or "I make-believe myself, by being a horse, dog, cat or eater of invisible ice cream and climber of unseen mountains.") This distinction between "spectatorship" and "complementary actor" is described by Dunn and Dale (1984). They report that mothers often take a spectator role in encouraging play, while siblings play active participating roles. It may be that fathers who do actively encourage play do so in a manner that is qualitiatively different than mothers and more similar to that of older siblings.

Another trend is worth mentioning here: two-thirds of the fathers engaging in role play with their children did so with sons, while only one-third of those fathers took active roles with daughters. It may be that the themes commonly reported by daughters (Mother-baby, "Barbies"; Cinderella;) are not as attractive or familiar to fathers as those themes reported by sons (fireman, policeman, cowboys). Star Wars themes were reported by both boys and girls in nearly equal frequency, but boys tended to emphasize fighting and girls rescue or hiding themes in describing their roles.

Situations Related to Make-Believe Play

Discouraging Make-Believe Play:

Many parents of both sexes reported that they actively discouraged fantasy play in situations where they expected their children to focus on reality. Examples related to safety (crossing the street) or expediency (getting ready for church; tying up the only bathroom with long conversations with an imaginary friend). On the other hand, two parents (one mother of a daughter and one father of a son) reported using fantasy to encourage their children to do chores such as cleaning their rooms or taking a bath. These were both parents who spoke of enjoying their mutual pretend play with their children.

Four fathers and none of the mothers noted that they discouraged fantasy play when it was deceitful, "lying" or "avoiding responsibility or blame", an attitude attributed to working class parents in other studies (Bretherton, 1985). Two mothers of daughters mentioned discouraging sex play and one mother discouraged make-believe when her daughter was wearing church clothes. One mother explicity mentioned discouraging role play of television characters, and 8 mothers and 7 fathers noted that violence or gun play were actively discouraged as pretend themes in their homes. Only one parent (a father of a son) noted that he actively discouraged pretend play when his son was "practicing his letters and numbers, so he'll be ready to go to kindergarten". This attitude has been noted by several preschool teachers to be an increasing trend among middle class parents as they try to get their children into the "best" private schools (Almy et al., 1983), although it was not common in this sample.

Sixty-eight percent of the 41 parents who responded "yes" to the question of fantasy play ever becoming dangerous for young children mentioned that they feared that the borders of fantasy and reality might become blurred. Five of those parents mentioned that they would inhibit fantasy that might cause

their children to become fearful (eg: "monster play" for a two year old) and 8 of the 41 parents noted that they felt confusing reality and fantasy borders might cause their child to misjudge consequences. Several of these parents gave examples of trying to fly like Wonder Woman or to out-run cars like Spiderman.

Encouraging Make-Believe Play:

In describing situations where they might encourage make-believe play, 23% of the mothers who encouraged pretend play noted that such encouragement was a means of helping their children pass the time in "waiting for a dentist appointment" or "travelling in the car on a long trip" or when the child seemed bored or "at loose ends". Eight percent of the fathers who encouraged pretend play reported such a use, and both of those fathers were primary caretakers of their children. These situations are consistent with those described by Singer (1973) as common uses of make-believe by imaginative children.

Eight percent of the parents who encouraged pretend play expressed the value of make-believe in helping their children to master a new and/or fearful experience. For example, Mike, father of three year old Randy said "Randy was totally freaked by power lawn mowers until he had a play lawn mower and he pretended to cut the grass with it a few times." Cheryl, mother of five year old Karla described how Karla took her imaginary friends with her when going to use the public restroom at a park.

The children themselves often described both of these uses (alleviating boredom or fear) when they talked about laying with special toys or imaginary friends. Erica, age 4, "Well, you see I take Big Doggie (a stuffed animal) to birthday parties 'cuz then it doesn't matter if I know all the kids there." Patrick, age two and a half, takes "Bappy" his imaginary dog to church with him. It's not clear in the latter situation whether "Bappy" helps to alleviate fear or boredom, or both, for Patrick.

Parents' Reports of Roles Portrayed by Children

Mothers and fathers consistently described the same roles for their children. Even those fathers who answered "don't know" or "not home to see" about times and durations of pretend play episodes seemed to be familiar with two or more of the roles played by their children.

In looking at both age and sex differences two interesting trends emerge: 1) children in the youngest age group (33 months - 39 months) played more roles depicting family themes than children in the two older groups. These are termed "relational roles: by Garvey and Berndt, 1977, further elaborated by Forys and McCune-Nicholch, 1984, as being typical of the play of two year olds. All of the 6 girls in this youngest group and 5/6 boys were described as primarily playing "mother and baby" or "daddies and mommies". But the girls' repertoires ended here while the boys were characterized as also playing "fireman", policeman", "garbageman" or "train engineers". It would appear that Dunn and Dale's (1984) finding that mothers more often initiated nurturing themes in play with daughters than sons relates to this difference. One mother of a daughter in the study explicitly noted encouraging "mothering-type", role play in her daughter. It is perhaps also a reflection of a common sterotype in our society that women may be fulfilled in their roles as mothers, while men are encouraged to seek fullfillment in occupational as well as parental roles.

Roles reported for both Group II (42 - 54 months) and Group III (55 - 63 months) consisted primarily of "as if" (possible adult roles in our society) and "what-if" (fantasy roles) (Bretherton, 1985) with both types mentioned for both boys and girls. Examples of "as if" roles include: teacher, doctor, cheerleader, singer, ballerina, truck driver, cowboy, policeman, baseball play. "What-if" roles fell into three categories: 1) those drawn from television or movies (Mickey Mouse, Princes Leia, Hans Solo, Superman, Wonder Women); 2) those drawn from storybooks or movies (Peter Pan, Cinderella, Peter and the Wolf,

Flossie Bobbsey, Frances); 3) imaginary characters who perform supernatural feats. These were often imaginary friends ("Jeff"; "Baba Fetchit"; "Cessa"; Bappy"; "Jesus" and "Princess Crinkle"). Imaginary companions were reported by parents in 11 out of 36 families and an additional 4 children described companions that they had not revealed to their parents. This figure is consistent with the estimates made by other researchers that 30-50% of preschool children create imaginary friends. (Singer, 1973).

Role of Siblings

Fifty-six percent (10 of the 18) children who had older siblings were reported to play more sophisticated roles with the older sibling than when alone or with same age or younger peers. For example, the mother of two year old Mary notes: "With older children or brother she will take a lesser role such as R2D2 so she can play Star Wars." Mother of three year old Betty: "With the baby she plays domestic themes and with older kids she plays Peter Pan."

This finding is consistent with recent research (Dunn, 1983; Dunn and Dale, 1984) suggesting that the role of older siblings in modeling complex play themes may be equal to if not more critical than parental modeling.

A finding that might prove provocative for future research into the role of siblings is that, of the 15 children reporting imaginary friends, 60% explicitly related that friend to the need for a sibling. In two cases the child was the first child of a second marriage and the older siblings were 5-6 years older than the preschool child. In two cases the child had a sibling who was developmentally delayed and did not make an adequate playmate; in 5 of the cases, parents report that the creation of an imaginary friend coincided with expressing a desire for a baby sister or brother to the parents.

Although no significant effects were found for either birth order or imaginary companions with regard to percentages of solitary play, parallel play, group play or cognitive complexity of solitary play at school, future studies

regarding pretense play in the home might be wise to include information about siblings and imaginary friends.

Television

Contrary to expectation, there were few differences among families with regard to television viewing. All but two of the 36 families reported that their children watched 60 minutes or less of television per day and all parents reported monitoring both timing (eg "only before dinner") and content (eg "no violence" or "only kid's programming") in a consistent manner. None of the measures related to play at school correlated significantly with television viewing.

Previous research on television viewing (Siegel, 1983) has reported that school age children report viewing more hours and different shows than their parents report. Perhaps preschoolers and/or their parents haven't encountered this discrepancy in authority. All children interviewed reported that they had to ask to watch TV and that only certain shows were allowed. Two 5 year old daughters noted that their fathers were easier to approach than their mothers (eg "I always ask my dad, 'cause he'll say yes" noted Sandy, age 5). But all other children in the sample reported a view of television viewing consistent with that reported by their parents.

Play at Home and at School

The data base from which this questionnaire data was drawn was primarily designed to assess age differences in patterns of social and cognitive play in a cooperative preschool setting (Monighan, 1985). A secondary purpose was to examine links between children's behavior at home and their play at school.

Contrary to my expectations, there were few correlations between characteristics of the home environment and play patterns at school. This may be accounted for by small sample sizes (N=12 for each group). Alternatively,

it may be that children behave differently at home and at school, a finding described by Tizard and Hughes (1984) in studying language development of 4 year old girls in Great Britian.

In addition, neither birth order nor presence of an imaginary companion correlated significantly with measures of social play (solitary play, parallel play and group play) or cognitive levels of solitary play (functional, constructive, dramatic and rule-based). The cognitive categories were expressed both as separate percent frequencies and weighted "total complexity" scores.

There was a significant correlation between mother's reports of the degree of encouragement of pretend play and the cognitive complexity of children's solitary play at school for Group II. ($r=.75$; $p < .05$) Degree of encouragement was rated as follows:

0 does not encourage pretend
1 does not interfere in pretend
2 provides props for pretend play
3 encourage child as a spectator
4 takes a role in child's play

There was also a significant correlation between reports of children playing alone frequently at home and high levels of solitary play complexity at school. ($r = .33$; $p < .05$) It appears that a preference for solitary play may be a personality variable and that children who enjoy it engage in it both at home and at school.

Statistical analysis by means of Kendell's Tau yielded significant correlations between the teacher's rankings of imaginativeness for the children and rankings of total cognitive complexity of solitary play for all groups for the males.

$\pi = .72$ for Group I $p < .05$

$\pi = .73$ for Group II $p < .05$

$\pi = .80$ for Group III $p < .01$

and for Group III for the females $= \pi .87$ $p < .01$

The children in Group III had all been enrolled in the preschool for at

least 2 years. The teachers long familiarity with the children in this group may have accounted for her accuracy in predicting the cognitive complexity of their play.

It is also possible that she attended more carefully to the behavior of the boys, a phenomenon reported in the literature on teacher interaction in preschool settings (Fagot and Kronsberg, 1982).

Summary

In summary, this study found significant differences in the home play patterns reported by mothers and fathers of preschool children. Fathers reported engaging in significantly more rough and tumble play with both their sons and daughters, and mothers reported engaging in significantly more make-believe play with their children of both sexes. Future research examining patterns of play in single parent homes might provide a supplement to these findings.

Mothers and fathers also differed significantly in their reports of active encouragement of make-believe activity in the home. All but one of the mothers and a majority of the fathers encourage pretend play for their preschool children. Fathers of sons reported encouraging such play more frequently than fathers of daughters while mothers encouraged both sexes equally.

At least half of all the parents reported modeling pretend play by suggesting roles and themes from the sidelines or actively taking roles. This was one variable from the home environment that correlated significantly with the cognitive complexity of children's solitary play at school. Three-fourths of the fathers compared to half of the mothers actively participated in make-believe role play. This finding might be seen to support the trend that fathers are more playful and less directive than mothers in their play with children. (Clarke-Stewart, 1978), although fathers were more actively engaged in role play with sons than with daughters, perhaps indicating a slight preference for parent

play with same-sex children (Belsky, 1978).

Both mothers and fathers noted that they discouraged play in situations calling for safety, social protocol and/or expediency. They also noted that play that was physicially dangerous or fearful to their children would be discouraged. Only fathers mentioned that lying or deceit about responsibility would call for discouraging fantasy and only mothers of daughters mentioned sex play or getting clothing soiled as grounds for discouraging make-believe activity. A few parents of both sexes mentioned using make-believe to help their children accomplish tasks, alleviate boredom or master fears. These were the uses of make-believe described by most of the children in their audiotaped interviews.

Mothers, fathers and children were consistent in their reports of roles played by children. In general, younger children played more "relational" roles. Older children were reported to play more "as-if" and "what-if" fantasy roles in about equal frequency. Over half of the parents of children who had older siblings noted that they felt the younger children played more complex roles in the company of their older siblings than when alone or with same age or younger playmates. Sixty percent of children who created imaginary playmates did so in relation to a desire for a sibling playmate, a finding that may be interesting for future research.

As with role play, parents and childrens' accounts of times and programs for television were remarkably consistent, with all families reporting a consistent monitoring of viewing.

Teachers rankings of imaginativeness in each age group by sex correlated significantly with rankings of scores on the complexity of solitary play for all the boys and for all children in the group who had attended preschool for more than a year. This correlation may simply reflect the teacher's familiarity with those children.

Implications for Future Research

Although the intent of the original observational study was to examine parallels in the developmental trends of preschoolers play and speech, the data collected from the home environment and from interviewing children proved to be very rich. Recognizing the limitations of both self-report questionnaires and clinical interviews with young children, this detailed analysis was conducted because this focus is particularly important in the field of early childhood education. Preschool children bring to the educational setting closely related and highly concentrated influences from their homes. Exploration of the relationships and behavior patterns that may contribute to individual differences in play patterns among young children is useful for parent educators, practitioners in early childhood settings, and to parents of young children, as well as of significant interest in the current literature on children's play and development. Another study is in the planning stages to compare these results with a Head Start population, and includes both working class and single parent families. The influence of siblings and peers in day care settings is another issue that emerged from my work that will be explored more thoroughly in the future study.

REFERENCES

Almy, M., Monighan, P., Scales, B., & Van Hoorn, J., Recent Research on Play: The Perspective of the Teacher. In L. G. Katz (Ed.) Current Topics in Early Childhood Education. New Jersey: Ablex, 1983.

Belsky, J. (1978). Mother-father-infant interaction: A naturalistic obervational study. Developmental Psychology, 15, 601-607.

Bishop, D. W. & Chase, C. Parent conceptual systems, home play environment and potential creativity in children. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 1971, 12:318-338.

Bretherton, I. Pretense: Practicing and Playing with Social Understanding in C. Brown and A. Goffried (Eds.), Play Interactions: The Role of Toys and Parental Involvement in Children's Development. Johnson and Johnson Pediatric Round Table: 11, 1985.

Bradley, R. & Caldwell, B., 1984. The relation of infants' home environments to achievement test performance in first grade, a follow-up study. Child Development 55:803-809.

Clarke-Stewart, K. A. (1978). And daddy makes three: The father's impact on mother and young child. Child Development, 49, 466-478.

Cohen, D. Television and the Child Under Six. In B. Logan & K. Moody (Eds.), Television Awareness Training: The viewers guide for family and community. New York: Media Action Research Center, 1979.

DiPietro, J. Rough and tumble play: A function of gender. Developmental Psychology, 1981, 17, 50-58.

Dunn, J. Sibling Relationships in Early Childhood. Child Development, 1983, 54, 787-811.

Dunn, J. Pretend Play in the Family in C. Brown and A. Goffried (Eds.), Play Interactions: The Role of Toys and Parental Involvement in Children's Development. Johnson and Johnson Pediatric Round Table: 11, 1985.

Dunn, J. and Dale, N. I a Daddy: 2 Year Olds' Collaboration in Joint Pretend with Sibling and with Mother, in I. Bretherton, (Ed.) Symbolic Play: The Development of Social Understanding. New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1984.

Dunn, J. and Wooding, C. Play in the home and its implications for learning In B. Tizard and D. Harvey (Eds.) Biology of Play. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977.

Fagot and Kronsberg, Sex differences: biological and social factors influencing the behavior of young boys and girls, in Moore, S. and Cooper, C. (Eds.), The Young Child Reviews of Research Vol. 3. Washington, D.C. NAEYC, 1982.

Fein, G. Play with actions and objects. In B. Sutton-Smith (Ed.) Play and Learning. New York: Gardner Press, 1980.

Fein B. The Affective Psychology of Play in C. Brown and A. Goffried (Eds.), Play Interactions: The Role of Toys and Parental Involvement in Children's Development. Johnson and Johnson Pediatric Round Table: 11, 1985.

Forys, S. and McCune-Nicholich, L. Shared Pretend: Socio-dramatic Play at 3 Years of Age. In I. Bretherton (Ed.) Symoblic Play: Development of Social Understanding. New York: Academic Press, 1984.

Garvey, C. and Berndt, R. The Organization of Pretend Play. JSAS Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 1977, 7 (Ms. No. 1589).

Goldman, J.A. Social participation in preschool children in same - vs. mixed age groups. Child Development, 1981, 52:644-650.

Gottfried A. W. & Gottfried, A. E. Home environment and cognitive development in young children of middle socio-economic status families. In A. W. Gottfried (Ed.), Home Environment and Early Cognitive Development: Longitudinal Research. New York: Academic Press, 1984.

Honig, A. Television and Young Children, Young Children, 1983, 38(4):63-76.

Joopnarine, J. and Mounts, N. Mother-child and father-child play, Early Childhood Development and Care, 1985, 20, 157-169.

Langlois, J. and Downs A. Mothers, fathers and peers as socialization agents of sex-typed behaviors in young children. Child Development, 1980, 51, 1237-1247.

Miller, P. and Garvey, C. Mother-Baby Role Play: Its Origins in Social Support in I. Bretherton (Ed.) Symbolic Play: the Development of Social Understanding, New York: Academic Press, 1984.

Monighan, P. Preschoolers Pretend Play: An Observational Study, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1978.

Monighan P. The Development of Symbolic Expression in Preschool Play and Language. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Ill., 1985.

Murray, J. P. Television and Youth, Boystown, Nebraska. The Boystown Center for the Study of Youth Development, 1980.

O'Connell, B. & Bretherton I. Toddlers' Play, Alone and with Mother: The Role of Maternal Guidance in I. Bretherton, I, Symbolic Play: The Development of Social Understanding, New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1984.

Rubin, K. Play, Peer Interaction, and Social Development, in C. Brown and A. Gottfried (eds.), Play Interactions: The Role of Toys and Parental Involvement in Children's Development. Johnson and Johnson Pediatric Round Table: 11, 1985.

Schwartzmann, H. Child-Structured Play: A Cross Cultural Perspective in C. Brown and A. Gottfried (eds.), Play Interactions: The Role of Toys and Parental Involvement in Children's Development. Johnson and Johnson Pediatric Round Table: 11, 1985.

Siegel, A. "Television and Children" keynote address, Mills College Springfest Conference, 1983.

Silvern, A. and Williamson, P. Parent Teaching Styles While Helping Their Children Learn Logo Programming. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Ill., 1985.

Singer J. The Child's World of Make Believe, New York: Academic Press, 1973.

Tizard, B. and Hughes, M. Young Children Learning Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Winn, M. The Plug-in Drug, New York: Bantam, 1977.

TABLE 1

Age Ranges, Mean Ages and Sample Sizes for Groups I, II, III

	N = 12 Group I		N = 12 Group II		N = 12 Group III	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Age Range (in months)	33-39	33-39	42-51	42-54	55-65	57-63
Mean Age (in months)	37	35	48	48	60	60

TABLE 2

Group Means, Standard Deviations and Sample Sizes for all Dependent Variables Related to Play

Dependent Variables	Group Means N=12 I	Group Means N=12 II	Group Means N=12 III	Standard Deviations N=12 I	Standard Deviations N=12 II	Standard Deviations N=12 III
Social Play						
Solitary play	175.3	158.3	132.9	16.3	32.5	27.1
Parallel play	86.7	102.6	66.7	55.1	20.3	38.7
Group play	98.3	122.8	150.2	21.6	33.4	20.6
Cognitive play						
Functional solitary play	142.5	119.8	77.8	32.7	62.8	63.5
Constructive solitary play	105.7	114.7	127.5	46.0	64.0	82.6
Dramatic solitary play	100.9	110.1	137.2	51.0	46.3	72.6
Games/Rules solitary play	00.0	07.1	0.00	0.00	24.5	0.00
Total cognitive play complexity	1.70	1.97	2.18	.41	.28	.40

Table 3

Frequencies of Predominant Mode of Play Reported by Mothers of Sons and Fathers of Sons (N = 32)

	Rough and Tumble	Make-Believe	Commercial Games
Mothers of Sons	0	12	4
Fathers of Sons	12	3	1
	12	15	5

$X^2 = 19.2$, d.f. = 2 $p < .01$

Table 4

Frequencies of Predominant Mode of Play Reported by Mothers of Daughters and Fathers of Daughters (N = 36)

Mothers of Daughters	2	14	2
Fathers of Daughters	10	4	4
	12	18	6

$X^2 = 11.6$ d.f. = 2 $p < .01$

Table 5

Frequencies of Mothers and Fathers Who Report Encouraging or Not Encouraging Make-Believe Activity at Home

	Encourage Pretend	Do Not Encourage
Mothers	35	1
Fathers	24	12

$X^2 = 11.36$ d.f. = 1 $p < .01$